

**Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, MSW, Director, Public Policy & Advocacy****Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc.****In support of *House Bill 5354 Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children***

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and honorable members of the Committee on Children, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of *House Bill 5354 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children*. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's mission is to protect the right of all individuals to control their own fertility. Over the past several decades new studies continue to demonstrate that environmental contaminants and exposure to chemicals can have a detrimental effect on one's reproductive health. As a trusted provider of women's health care to over 65,000 patients every year we are committed to educating ourselves and patients about the dangers and health risks from exposure to chemicals for women, men and their families.

There is growing scientific evidence that shows some industrial chemicals, called endocrine disruptors can cause serious risk to women's health such as infertility, breast cancer, early puberty, polycystic ovarian syndrome, abnormal uterus development, uterine fibroids, endometriosis, recurrent miscarriage and shortened lactation. Effects particular to reproduction in males include abnormal development of the prostate and urethra, decreased sperm count and quality, sexual dysfunction and increased risk of prostate cancer.<sup>i</sup> Chemicals, such as Bisphenol-A (BPA), is a hormone disruptor which can mimic natural estrogen and what we are learning is that the timing and level of exposure can affect how a woman's body develops and functions. Studies demonstrate that the chemical is harmful at both low and high doses of exposure, and that the timing of exposure during critical windows of development—especially during fetal development—may cause irreversible and grave problems with the reproductive system both earlier and later in life.<sup>ii</sup> Hazardous chemicals in everyday products such as cosmetics, personal care products cleaning products, our environments and in things we touch every day get into women's bodies, breast milk, and in the uterus.

What research confirms is more women are experiencing difficulty in conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy, which affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982. The incidence of reported difficulty has almost doubled in younger women, ages 18-25<sup>iii, iv</sup> There is evidence of a growing trend in the U.S. toward earlier breast development and onset of menstruation in girls. Studies suggest that endocrine-disrupting chemicals, particularly estrogen mimics are important factors associated with altered puberty timing.<sup>v</sup> Breast cancer rates in the U.S. have increased by more than 40% between 1973 and 1998. Today, a women's chance of getting a breast cancer diagnosis is 1 in 8 (up from 1 in 10 in 1973).<sup>vi</sup> Yet no chemicals are currently regulated under the federal Toxic Substances Control Act because of their potential harm to reproduction or development. But other authoritative bodies have listed more than 50 industrial chemicals as reproductive toxins.<sup>vii</sup> According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2011) the current federal law "fails to protect children and pregnant women" from exposure to chemicals during critical windows of development. HB 5354 takes meaningful steps forward to identify chemicals of high concern and establish a sustainable process to reduce exposure or give citizens much needed information and will ultimately reduce health care costs in CT.

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is committed to promoting reproductive justice and we have long fought for a woman's right to control her reproductive destiny and plan her family. We have a growing concern that the complexities of a woman's environment, including her physical geography, race, class, access to healthcare to name a few, can play a debilitating role on her fertility. This is why we have turned our attention to chemicals of concerns and reproductive toxicants, such as BPA, that are affecting the ability of women to plan their families; to become pregnant, have a healthy pregnancy, and give birth to a healthy child.

The time is now to reduce exposure to women, men and children. There is a strong public health benefit to identifying chemicals of concern to children and obtaining information on products that expose children to these chemicals. Connecticut is recognized as a leader and we should continue to pass legislation that moves toward a more comprehensive solution. There is no fiscal impact to our state to address what medical and scientific communities state is an urgent public health issue and this bill is sufficiently narrow to only address those chemicals that pose a risk to a developing fetus and young children. HB 5354 is a step in the right direction and continues CT's leadership in protecting citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, from toxic chemicals. We urge you to support *House Bill 5354 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children*. We at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England believe this is an urgent matter of reproductive justice. All women should be guaranteed the right to control their own fertility, to bear healthy babies and live in safe and healthy communities. Thank you.

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i Guttmacher Policy Review Winter 2010, Volume 13, Number 1 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/gpr/13/1/gpr131810.html>

ii Ibid.

iii Anjani Chadra and Elizabeth Hervey Stephen, "Impaired Fecundity in the United States: 1982-1995," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 30, no 1, (1998): 34-42.

iv Kate Brett, "Fecundity in 2002 National Survey of Family Growth Women 15—24 Years of Age," Hyattsville, MD, National Center for Health Statistics (2008)

v Susan W. Euling, et al., "Role of Environmental Factors in the Timing of Puberty," *Pediatrics*, 121, S3 (February 2008): S167-71.

vi Safer Chemicals, Safer Families "The Health Case for Reforming TSCA" <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/>

vii California Environmental Protection Agency, "Proposition 65: The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986," Chemicals Known to the State to Cause Cancer or Reproductive Toxicity List as of September 11, 2009